

Message Text

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65L

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 INR-07 CIAE-00 PM-03 SP-02

NEA-10 MC-02 EB-07 PRS-01 ACDA-05 /068 W

----- 096859

P 282245Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6883

INFO USCINCSO PRIORITY

SECDEF PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 2748

SECDEF FOR JCS AND ISA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, GT, US

SUBJECT: GUATEMALAN AIR FORCE PURCHASE OF ISRAELI AIRCRAFT

REF: (A) GUATEMALA 1453, (B) GUATEMALA 2109, (C) USCINCSO MSG
311921Z MAR 75

1. USMILGP OFFICER CONFIRMED MAY 27 IN CONVERSATION WITH MINDEF RUBIO THAT GOG HAS DEFINITELY COMMITTED ITSELF TO PURCHASE ISRAELI AIRCRAFT REPORTED REF (B). MINISTER SAID PRINCIPAL REASON WAS THEIR STOL CAPABILITY IN RELATION TO TERRAIN IN PETEN AREA AND THEIR USEFULNESS IN TRANSPORTING SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT IN SUPPORT OF PETROLEUM EXPLORATION IN THAT AREA. HE SAID AIR FORCE CHIEF, COL. SALAZAR, AND G-4, COL CASTILLO, WOULD LEAVE FOR ISRAEL JUNE 7 TO MAKE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS.

2. ASKED WHETHER GOG STILL INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING ELEVEN USED C-47'S (REF A), MINISTER SAID YES, BUT LEFT DISTINCT IMPRESSION IT WAS NO LONGER LIFE-AND-DEATH MATTER. ASKED HOW GUATEMALA HOPED FINED TRAINED PILOTS AND MAINTENANCE MEN FOR BOTH ARAVAS AND C-47'S, MINISTER SAID HIS STAFF WAS LOOKING ALL OVER LATIN AMERICA FOR PLACES FOR ABOUT TEN GUATEMALAN PILOTS IN TRAINING SCHOOLS OF FRIENDLY COUNTRIES, INASMUCH AS SLOTS AVAILABLE IN USAF COURSES (FIVE IN FY 76) WERE "FULL". AS FOR MAINTENANCE MEN,
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MINISTER SAID HE HOPED THAT WITHIN NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS MIN-

ISTRY WOULD HAVE ENOUGH FUNDS TO FINANCE ADEQUATE TRAINING.

3. OTHER SOURCES HAVE TOLD MILGP COST OF ARAVAS WILL BE APPROXIMATELY \$8 MILLION (\$800,000 EACH FOR TEN PLANES) PLUS \$2 MILLION FOR TRAINING AND SPARES.

4. COMMENT: DELAY IN US APPROVAL OF C-47 SALE MAY WELL HAVE BEEN FACTOR IN GOG CHOICE OF ARAVAS. DECISION HAS ONE SIDE BENEFIT FROM US POINT OF VIEW: ARAVAS ARE BELIEVED TO BE MUCH SHORTER-RANGE THAN C-47'S, AND WHILE CAPABLE (IN COMBINATION WITH EXISTING AIRCRAFT) OF TRANSPORTING ENTIRE PARACHUTE BATTALION, TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TAKE IT TO ANY NEIGHBORING COUNTRY AND RETURN.

5. AMEMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATION ON US RESPONSE TO GUATEMALAN REQUEST FOR C-47'S WILL BE SUBMITTED SHORTLY.
ANDREWS

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